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## Genesis of Symbolism

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*There has been investigated genesis of symbolism in the cultural history. «Among such social-philosophic notions as society, culture, civilization, system, human, sense, sign, truth and others, concept «symbol» takes a special place» (Aslamazishvili, 2008, 49). The crises of culture and civilization were interpreted as transitional phases of culture and its symbolic systems. A closer look at the symbols and their application in various cultures gave rise to approach the history of mankind through a number of various views of many a thinker who had developed their both profound and fascinating theories of symbolism. Outstanding thinkers treated the symbol as a multi-sense of its various meanings. Nevertheless, the multi-sense symbol could not ultimately open its «truth» and its force and its sense of this world and of the beyond. The symbol persisted in being the same unique thread which had been leading human society since its origin to its only protosense, prasense, out-of-reach and outright truth of being. Many a thousand years ago the ancestors of modern man having been singled out by toil from the animals, started to create and apply symbols that enabled them thereby to become human beings – homo sapiens. Thus developing the symbolics made for translating the possible into the probable and the real.*

*The advanced results of symbolization in mythologies and religions had already made for generalizations of symbolizing practice and facilitated understanding the problem of symbolization in the incipient philosophy. Symbols had been mentioned by philosophers long ago before Socrates and ancient Greeks interpreted the world as the symbolic Universe. However the first categorization of the symbol was performed in religious and philosophical doctrines in the Middle Ages, and the philosophical reflection of the symbol as a separate category was being further developed by I.Kant and J.W.Goethe who had been suggesting symbolism as a research method to study culture.*

*Keywords: mankind, symbol, culture, civilization, myth, religion, philosophy.*

### Point

The crisis of present anthropogenic civilization generates the searching of some new world outlook guidelines that are reflected in the culture striving for a transition into a novel condition. In so doing, the civilization crisis primarily appears as a transitive condition

of culture and its systems of symbols. The transition periods in continuously varying social life and social consciousness are characterized by more intense mutual relations in the «person – culture – symbol» triad. The symbol is getting more of personal and social importance during such periods. Symbols as

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spiritual sphere elements serve as a last resort for man and mankind who sense their position in the world and long for discovering the existence sense and apprehending the line and conditions of their development.

The effects of advanced symbolizing in mythologies and religions had already made for generalizations of symbolizing practice that resulted in the definition of the problem of the symbolical in arising philosophies. The philosophers before Socrates had interpreted the world as a symbolical Universe but the first categorization of the symbol was developed in religious and philosophical doctrines in the Middle Ages. Then the philosophical reflection of the symbol as a separate category was wrought by I.Kant and J.W.Goethe who suggested symbolism as a research method to study culture. Since then the symbol category application has become pervasive and universal in a lot of thinkers' concepts.

Multi-sensibility and vagueness of symbol are emphasized, moreover, its heterogeneous meanings are actually able to be displayed as signs, images, and metaphores. Any of these can acquire symbolical relevance. The range of symbol meanings is not always cognitive but in many respects it is often based on intuition and feeling. Essential cultural dimension of symbol presupposes discovering various functional meanings. Researchers reveal the intuitive and instinctive nature of symbol. Symbol is not limited solely by the frames of perceptible and rationalistic culture. Symbol promptly and largely gets beyond its scope into the area of super-sensible. Hence we can tell the symbol from any other signs and denominations.

Various interpretations of the concept «symbol» outline the following essential characteristics of symbol: differentiability; pithiness; imperativeness; universality; communicativeness; multi-sensibility;

teleological ability; duality. In our opinion, symbol is specified with these characteristics as an intuitive spiritual element displayed by means of signs, images, and metaphors that give shape to symbolic reality.

### Example

#### *0. Beginning of symbol (symbolizing)*

Symbolism has undergone a long and eventful history of development which originated in immemorial times at the dawn of human society. Most researchers of anthropogenesis agree that symbolizing practice is a peer of *homo sapiens*. «Man, as a matter of fact, emerged not at the moment when «an ape grabbed a stick with its hand», but at the time when it started to symbolize, that is when it set about «naming», having surprisingly and fearfully woken up from the «Golden Age» dream and having escaped from a non-creative condition of «non-reflected pleasure» (Kierkegaard)» (Karmadonov, 2004, 118). Our ancestors' mental reflection development in the course of their practical life activity conducted to creative thinking genesis, «thinking in complexes» (L.Vygotsky), and to the emergence of the need for communicative denominating. Expanding the use of speech symbols (denominating), generating conceptual images (abstracting), language metaphors creating (anthropomorphizing) – all these could constitute the syncretic origin in which the «need of marking things» (V.Ivanov) emerged. Meeting this novel need through symbolizing practice became a constitutive attribute of emerging man. Petroglyphic artifacts from monumental products of amazing cave art up to tiny sculptures of the upper Paleolithic age (40,000 – 10,000 years ago) are striking illustrations of accumulated symbolization experience. Mythologies and religions emerged and developed as a result of symbolizing.

### *1. Symbol activity in mythology and religion (symbolization)*

The symbol activity in mythology and religion attracted the attention of authors of quite a few significant philosophical works in which they analyzed intricate mutual relations of the symbolical and mythological. As A.F.Losev (the philosopher who profoundly investigated dialectics of myth) put it, «the Myth is never only a schema or only an allegory, but always first of all a s y m b o l and being already a symbol, it can comprise schematic, allegorical, and sophisticatedly symbolical strata» (Losev, 1991, 62). The myth has a symbolical form of expression and in this sense the myth is a system of symbols developed in the sphere of practical human life. The myth is not an actual history, it is a stratification of histories and legends, circumstances and imaginations. Its genesis is similar to the origin of minerals. In any myth are spiritual processes of transition from one state to another represented metaphorically, e.g. in Hesiod's mythical cosmogony with the transformation of chaos into some arranged substance when gods had appeared from chaos. The transformation of chaos into gods was the first spiritual process of the transition, the first transition from shapelessness to structural properties. While acquiring symbols, signs, images of gods, metaphorical comparisons, the untimely chaotic non-existence changed into the structured being and thereby got the symbolic property, i.e. it was symbolized.

The symbol has become the central concept of symbolism. Any phenomenon can become a symbol in the context of culture, and in fact it is possible to symbolize anything. There has followed a huge variety of world outlook systems (mythologies, religions, philosophies) in history and at present. The symbolization in the form of metaphorization, being a core of myths creating, is a non-reflected basis in genesis and functioning

of mythological world-view. In S.S.Averintsev's opinion, the mythological stage of world outlook suggests a whole identity of the symbolical form and its sense, excluding any reflection of the symbol (Averintsev, 2000, 159). At the same time the symbols in mythology get a system character in the course of further perfection of symbolizing and symbolization development, and there are prepared some premises for symbolism genesis as such. In his book «Signs, symbols and myths» L.Benuas argues, «life itself is the earliest and characteristic example of using symbols. It proved it when the primitive man had already said his first word. That is why live and organic symbolic language expresses spiritual truths best of all, and evangelical parables are indicative of this» (Benuas, 2004, 6].

Transition from mythology to religion was accompanied by designing religious symbolics and religion appeared as a «*system of consistently developed symbols*» (A.Bely's definition) (Bely, 1994, 247). Carefully developed systems of symbols in global religions acquired the status of global world outlook systems. In the course of their development from symbolizing practice to the generalized results of symbolization there arose a new stage of symbolism development. If in a myth one can liken symbols to dim lights in the dark sky which lighten some or other aspects of knowledge of man about the world and his position in it, then in religion the symbols become luminaries which glare and are capable to blind neophytes. The Deity cannot be expressed in words, only a symbol can specify its divinity, incomprehensibility, and greatness. T.B.Zakharyan corroborates that «the Believer vests all components of a religious symbol with attributes of the absolute: the symbol, the symbolized Deity, the method of symbolical activities (ceremony, ritual)» (Zakharyan, 2006, 20).

## 2. *Symbol in philosophy (symbolism per se)*

It should be noted that during crystallization of mythology, religion, and philosophy the symbol also crystallizes into the central concept of symbolism in the course of development from symbolizing through symbolization towards symbolism; it becomes explicit and systematized, gets other interpretations, but never loses its intuitive component. In the background of myth do we find a metaphor having a claim on universality and validity. In the background of religion there is an image because man was created in God's image. «And God said, Let us make man in our image» («The Holy Bible», 1962, 7). Philosophy having emerged, there is thinking about thinking, categorial thinking which is impossible without a discourse, nor without metaphors and conceptual images. Thus, the discourse has consequently emerged as another novel symbolical dimension.

The determination of the basic stages in symbolism development is pointed out by its intimate contacts with philosophical systems. We can find the art of constructing symbols in those cases when the concept faces the transcendental at the origins of philosophical thinking (Presocratics, the Upanishads) («Russian Humanitarian Internet-University»). Presocratics for the first time tried and put symbolization effects on a natural philosophy basis. Thus, Thales of Miletus believed water as the basis of the Universe and this suggested that everything should be mutable and flow from one to another. The world is fluid as water, water is a fundamental principle, «water is true reality» (Nietzsche, 2000, 239). Water interpreted in this way by Thales, symbolizes the whole universe and as a result of this symbolization the whole being, the whole cosmos is reduced to a single element. Thales' water is a universal concept, it is a symbolical expression. Therefore Thales can be considered an initiator of European symbolism in the history of philosophy. Thales'

flickering conjecture about symbolical definition of the fundamental principle of cosmos and its manifestations, was taken up by Anaximander (apeiron as the constant whole and its varying parts), by Anaximenes (air condensations and rarefactions), Heraclites (fire measures), Anaxagoras (nous and substance), Leucippus and Democritus (atoms and vacuum), Aristotle (entelechy and energy) (Aristotle, 1976).

### 2.1. *Philosophical and mythological symbolism*

The star of symbolism began to brightly shine just at the initial stage of its design in Pythagorean and Elean schools of philosophy. For their fundamental principle Pythagoreans suggested the comprehensive whole which consists of the unlimited and limited. As Aristotle commented later, «the number originates from the comprehensive whole», and the even (the unlimited) and the odd (the limited) are considered as the number elements (Ibid., 76). Thus Pythagoreanism symbolized cosmogony with the help of the number notion which subsequently took a modest but such an essential place as a fundamental symbolic sign in mathematics. According to Pythagoreans, harmony of the world was in a certain ratio of numbers (Pythagoras. Scientific Works). Pythagoreans deduced music of spheres. As A. Bely would remark later, «musical ideas are significant symbols» and «the symbol... is always musical» (Bely, 1994, 246).

Symbolism obtained rather a different functional value in the doctrine of Zeno of Elea who put forward his arguments (aporeae) against multitude and motility. In his well-known aporeae Zeno subjected incompleteness and unreality of the phenomenal world of multitude and motion to symbolization. Following his teacher Parmenides, he claimed that matter is one and uniform, that is why it is continuous and indivisible, it has no parts, it is motionless and infinite (Electronic

Library in Philosophy). In Zeno's paradoxical doctrine did thus symbolism derive involvement of the symbol in the world of matter.

We believe that the symbol is actually involved in the world of matter, that it is also uniform, continuous, indivisible, and infinite. Zeno presented his mathematical and physical ideas in the symbolical form, e.g. his Achilles became a symbol of speed. In contrast to Pythagoras who postulated harmony (unity) of the form and contents in his number, Zeno used symbols to designate the realities having neither ontological status nor terminological denomination. This modification of symbolism function can be considered as a pre-trend of splitting epistemological strategy into *homo reflectus* and *homo symbolicus* (Cassirer, 1998).

It should be noted that both Thales' water, and Pythagoras' number, and Zeno's aporeae are all the symbols borrowed from mythology which lost their mythological character in their novel and already philosophical application and acquired the status of Weltanschauung categories. So symbolism laid its own basis, its own philosophical foundation that was largely consolidated by Plato and Aristotle.

Plato's philosophy is distinguished as a fundamentally new stage in symbolism development because he designed his tenet as a world of Ideas, which he described in the language of symbols. Thus, in his parable about a cave its heroes became symbols of transition – from the invisible to the visible, from mystery to Alethia. Plato argues that cosmos is full of eide – ideas, which make up essence of things, those things can disappear, and ideas remain (Plato, 1994, 2006). M.K.Mamardashvili and A.M.Pyatigorskiy emphasizing the role of Plato in the development of the consciousness theory, believed that «Plato's ideas are rather symbols of consciousness than signs and consequently he is in a situation where he has to consider things

as designations of ideas: i.e. not ideas designate things in consciousness, but things are signs of ideas» (Mamardashvili and Pyatigorskiy, 1997, 94). As S.S.Averintsev put it, «a new situation arises in ancient art after Plato's experiences in designing philosophical mythology of the second order, no more pre-reflexive yet, but post-reflexive, that is symbolical in a strict sense of the word. Besides it was important for Plato to distinguish the symbol not from discursive and rationalistic allegory, but from pre-philosophical myth» (Averintsev, 2000, 159).

Having been studying the origins of symbolism and how the ancient Greek philosophers discovered the category of the symbol, we can draw the following conclusion: symbolism as a gnoseological realm in the philosophy of Ancient Greece did not exist yet, however premises of symbolism as ontological quintessence of symbolizing and symbolization had already been subjected to philosophic reflection. The philosophic stage expansion in the development of symbolism resulted in achieving a novel level of harmonization of the natural world and symbolic sphere of culture (of this world and the beyond).

## 2.2. Philosophical and religious symbolism

The next stage in the development of symbolism was realized in the Middle Ages when religious philosophy was being developed and religious and philosophical symbolism ensued. Symbols appeared for the first time as categories in the structural analysis of the symbol by the Church Fathers who had divided designation into two types of signs: the first type – a realistic sign, or an image, and the second type – a conventional sign, or a symbol (Filimonov, 1999). Despite categorization however, the development and dissemination of mysticism (J.Ekhardt, 2001; et al.) resulted in mystic and awesome features of religious and philosophic symbolism at the time.

### 2.3. Scientific symbolism

The New Time period saw natural philosophy supersede symbolism with its medieval mystic sense. The symbol was «desymbolized» by natural philosophy scholars. The rational approach to the symbolical was consequently realized in the formation of various logic systems in which the symbol was limited to sign functions. So the pragmatic line of the symbol explication prevailed, being accepted in mathematics, formal logic, and other theoretical and applied disciplines in which the symbol was treated as a graphic designation of quantities, magnitudes, values, dependences, scientific concepts, and ordinary notions. Classical rationalism in contrast to opposing empiricism relied on a priori foundation of knowledge though in the XX<sup>th</sup> century some neorationalists began to take into consideration not only actually cognitive matters but also the work of art imagination and intuition. On the other hand, empiricists of all minds sought to show that the knowledge which seemed to be a priori, was either a complicated product of experience or philosophical metaphysics, i.e. ignorance and even nonsense. And only much later it became clear that demarcation of synthetic (a posteriori) and analytical (a priori) statements was tentative and relative. Experience cannot be «pure data», it is always laden with interpretation («New Philosophic Encyclopedia»). So whilst symbolizing, man gets experience of interpretation.

A most brilliant philosopher of empiricism F.Bacon, just like Zeno, turns categories of logic into symbols, thus implementing the symbolism which is functionally distinct from religious and philosophic symbolism versions. Using a language of symbols after Plato in the category descriptions, F.Bacon criticizes «phantoms», or «idols» which corrupt our knowledge. Particular emphasis is placed upon the fact that «idols» are certain hidden instincts, transportable designs of

errors, symbolical hints of ancient feelings and myths. F.Bacon rejects all of them, however, paradoxical enough as it may seem, he also designs a mythological and metaphorical system of interpretation of the natural world and the kingdom of man. His symbolism version is as such as though he comes back to the empirical bases of symbolization and shapes them in the form of myth, suggesting plenty of symbolic images such as Cassandra or Divination, Pan or Nature, Narcissus or Self-Love, Orpheus or Philosophy, Sphinx or Science, et al. (Bacon, 1978, 241-300).

### 2.4. Symbolism per se

In his critical philosophy I.Kant subsequently considered man as a dual human being who is simultaneously part of the world of «nature» (the world of phenomena) and part of the kingdom of «freedom» (the world of «things in themselves», «transcendental objects», noumena). «Kant's study of culture connected the phenomenal world of nature-imposed necessity and noumenal world of moral freedom through symbolical activity of the subject's consciousness. Kant substantiated the symbol for the first time as a key concept of philosophical study of culture» («Cultural Philosophy. Genesis and Development», 1998, 79).

Art symbolism came into being in parallel with the development of symbolism proper during the Age of the Enlightenment. The explication of symbolism as a conception relates to times of romanticism origin and it is connected with the name of J.W.Goethe. I.Kant's propositions about the symbol in which he had joined the symbolical and intuitive and opposed them to the discursive epistemology, became the most important starting point in the development of Goethe's teaching on symbolism. J.W.Goethe opposes the symbol with its inexhaustibility to exhaustible allegory and introduces the concept of symbolism to romantic idea about creativity and art. He emphasizes

that «in symbols the phenomenon turns into an idea, the idea turns into an image but in such a manner that the idea remains infinitely active and inaccessible in an image, and even being pronounced in all languages, it remains unuttered» (cit. from Todorov, 1998, 239).

The symbol categorization in culture studies realized by I.Kant, J.W.Goethe and romanticists, endowed symbolism with very important features which arranged it as a realm of symbolical studying of culture. The findings of investigating this realm made up a critical stage in the development of symbolism which together with its philosophical explication took us back to return to mythological and religious symbolization but already on its own conceptual basis.

The concept of the symbol began to sound quite differently in F.Nietzsche's original philosophic creative work (Nietzsche, 1990, 2000). That insightful thinker without refusing the division of the symbol and allegory by romanticists, could easily operate both, having created a symbolic cult of Life opposed to Platonism and the Christian model of the world. F.Nietzsche brings to life a symbolical cult of a dancing God who is insisting and inheavening to blistering heavens: «Here I am light and here I am flying and I see me under myself and now a god is dancing in me» (Nietzsche, 1990, 35). This dancing and insisting God who is revealed in those who «writes with blood», generates a «Great Doubt» and symbolization as the only way of the mystical writing. The thinker sends symbolism back as if he returns it to its mythic sources – mythological symbolizations. Finally F.Nietzsche's symbolism underwent rather a practical, vital revolution than a categorical one, and his creative work transformed language of symbols into symbolism of language.

At present we still find echoes of the great thinker's ideas both in modern philosophical

or culturological theories and works of art. For more than a whole century mankind has been facing a choice: whether to take the side beyond good and evil (*jenseits von Gut und Böse*) or to sacrifice itself to the supreme glory of the Superman. F.Nietzsche's answer is a thirst of glory in three hundred years, and significantly winking symbols are an ideal of this way in an immense and boundless dialogue of Zarathustra with Life. Here are only hints, pervasive images and characters sending us to Ancient Greece and Persia, allegories and new tables that are sacral, full of esoteric knowledge accessible only to those who are «pure in spirit».

A.Bely calls F.Nietzsche a most refined stylist, a master of aphorism, a missionary of new life, but not a scientist, not a philosopher, not a poet (Bely, 1994, 179), but a symbolist, emphasizing that the method of his description has a form of teleologic symbolism (Ibid., 181). F.Nietzsche had not only revived myths, he created his own intriguing myths and legends, again striking fire in familiar heroes: Apollo, Dionysus, Ariadne, Zarathustra, the ugliest man, the rope-dancer, and at last a dancing star and the Superman – heroes of a new mythologem – all of them jumped off his «dancing pen». F.Nietzsche managed to have created his own mythology, moreover, a peculiar symbology. Thus Nietzscheism had eventually become another key point in the further development of symbolism, and his work was a brightest example of symbolical deconstruction of culture, morality, and human existence nature (Baran, 2003; Bely, 1994; «Why Nietzsche still? Reflections on Drama, Culture, and Politics», 2000).

## 2.5. Symbolism in the Russian envelope (symbology)

The next important stage of symbolism development both in developing the symbol theory and in its art-creative application, became

the «Silver Age» symbolical tradition which introduced an unique character into symbolism, having suffused it with artistry and feeling. The most burning world outlook problems were considered and elegantly reflected in a symbolical form by poets-symbolists. The most brilliant talent among young symbolists A.Bely wrote his philosophic treatise «Symbolism as World Outlook» in which he had been developing a sufficiently sophisticated theory that burst with original ideas about symbolism as a phenomenon and tradition. A.Bely denied symbolism to be doctrine-type, his symbolism rose to acquire traits of world outlook. He was absolutely sure that through a prism of symbols was it possible to apprehend effects of the eternal Universe and to unravel mysteries of human existence. In the treatise the thinker describes the symbol as the following: «Psychologically any word-formation undergoes three stages of development: 1) an epithet stage, 2) a comparison stage when the epithet causes a new subject, 3) an allusion stage (a hint, symbolism) when the struggle of two subjects forms a new subject, which does not involve a comparison in both members. In the last case we get a symbol that is an indecomposable unity» (Bely, 1994, 140-141).

Another outstanding theorist of the «Silver Age» symbolism V.Ivanov studied symbolism in the contemporary literature of his time and analyzed symbolism and religious creativity, the role of the word, its discolorment and non-vivacity. Having taken up F.Nietzsche and A.Bely's ideas V.Ivanov investigated Dionysianity and Christianity which he had connected in a uniform symbolical religion. According to V.Ivanov's view the symbol is a sign or omen, and if a symbol is a hieroglyph, thereby a mysterious hieroglyph, because it is significant and multi-sensed. Marking out realistic and idealistic symbolism, V.Ivanov calls the system of symbols as symbolics, and symbolism – the art based on

symbols (Ivanov). N.O.Lossky in his «The History of Russian Philosophy» in the chapter devoted to the poets-symbolists' philosophical ideas, wrote about V.Ivanov's views according to which the symbols are hints of a reality that is inexpressible in words; they give rise to the emergence of the myths expressing truth in a form of images (Lossky). N.A.Berdyaev asserted the primacy of the spiritual world, «Symbolical world-view and world outlook are the only profound feeling and understanding mysterious depth of existence. Our whole natural life here is full of sense only when it is symbolically consecrated» (Berdyaev, 2003, 62490-62491).

The poets-symbolists became successors of symbology creation tradition started by F.Nietzsche. However, as well as the romanticists of the Age of the Enlightenment, they back their literary works with theorizing, conceptually considering the symbol category, e.g. as an indecomposable Unity (A.Bely), as a multi-sensed hieroglyph (V.Ivanov), etc. The Russian symbolists' creative works at the end of the XIX<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the XX<sup>th</sup> centuries became a significant landmark in the development of symbolism. They had a great influence on both the neosymbological schools to have come into being and modern philosophies. Historically crises of culture, and general crisis situations have always been forcing people to pay greater attention to the results of their symbolizing practices. Thereby at the time of crisis, symbolism is more rapidly developed. Philosophers attempt to search for causes of an arising crisis of culture and also for new means of expression appropriate to the crisis situation and interpretation of symbolic phenomena.

### *3. Symbolism in the XX<sup>th</sup> century*

#### *3.1. Symbolism in existentialism*

The XX<sup>th</sup> century saw the emergence of existentialism which presented the world with



prominent thinkers and writers. Existential symbolizing emerged as a quintessence of the following stage in the development of symbolism. A. Camus and J. P. Sartre's literary and philosophical creative works have become a symbolic picture of the contemporary world. In «The Myth about Sisyphus» A. Camus depicts human existence as «Sisyphean toil» and consequently it is absurd to look for its sense because everything is only an illusion or illusory representation of a non-existent reality. Everything is ephemeral, blurred, and thus this makes us faint shadows and reflections of something deeper, all this makes a human being a symbol of something different with a question «*what for*» flung over the shoulder of Sisyphus who is inane rolling up his stone.

The other well-known existentialist J. P. Sartre in his philosophic work «Being and Nothing» and his literary novel «The Nausea» dwelt upon the same pessimistic mood as it was persistently depicted by A. Camus. Denying both the external and internal worlds, unsatisfied desire of overcoming oneself, revolt against everything and nothing, feelings of loneliness and futility, fear of the unknown and moreover of the known, panic and incessant nausea—all these became features of peculiar denying symbolization.

### 3.2. Symbolism in hermeneutics

In connection with existentialism there emerged a denying symbol in the contemporary French philosopher P. Ricoeur's symbolical hermeneutics. Speculating on an opportunity of understanding «to be simultaneously both within the framework of the symbol and beyond its limits», the philosopher distinguishes among three levels of thinking which proceeds from symbols: the first level – phenomenology – understanding the symbol with the help of a symbol or a collection of symbols; the second level – hermeneutics – connecting the sense given through a symbol, and its decoding; the

third level – philosophy – the thinking which proceeds from the symbol (Ricoeur, 2002, 370-372). Through the assumed ontogenetic pattern of symbolism we can see its clearly apparent phylogenesis: the first level complies with the stage of symbolizing, the second with the stage of symbolization, the third with the stage of symbolism per se.

### 3.3. Symbolism in philosophy of culture

An invaluable contribution to the development of symbolism per se was made by E. Cassirer. The thinker published his work «The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms» in two volumes, thus arguing that spiritual spheres of society are symbolic, filled with symbols and their forms, and their unity is also symbolical. Language, myth, art, and scientific knowledge are all called «symbolic forms» by E. Cassirer. He asserts that some originally creative force is internally inherent to any knowledge. «It applies as much as to art, myth, and religion as well as to knowledge. All of them live in original figurative worlds where the empirical data are not so much reflected but generated on a certain principle. All of them create some peculiar symbolic forms, even if not similar to intellectual symbols, then at least equal to them on their spiritual origin» (Cassirer, 2001, 15). In his work «The Experience about Man», E. Cassirer suggested instead of defining man as *animal rationale* (a reasonable animal) to define man as *animal symbolicum* (a symbolical animal) identifying man's specific nature and thus understanding a new way open to man, a way of civilization (Cassirer, 1998, 472). In the modern world of culture a novel man of a new civilization starts enjoying his rights, he is a man-symbol, a symbolic being. The sphere of culture expands in its development and «the physical reality is almost fading away as man's symbolic activities are increasing (Ibid., 471).

### 3.4. Symbolism in linguistics

Signs can be generally related to their represented realities in different ways. R.Jakobson relying on the American founder of semiotics C.S.Pierce's ideas about the nature of this relation, agrees with distinguishing three basic sign classes. Of the greatest interest for us is the third class of signs—signs-symbols. F. de Saussure let drop a brilliant remark about arbitrary relationship between the *signified* and its *signifier* in such signs. In our opinion, their relation in a symbol does exist but it is of an essentially different nature, it is rather conventional than arbitrary and it can exist due to all social relations. The destruction of this association is fraught with destructing society, state, social order, lifestyles, etc. as it was significative of the collapse of the USSR or Nazi Germany after its defeat. People and cultures can change due to their changeable symbol systems including languages. E.Sapir and B.Whorf are responsible for deeper understanding language symbolism development in their hypothesis of linguistic relativity which has taken a literary and psychological shape in G.Orwell's «newspeak.»

### 3.5. Symbolism in psychoanalysis

The founder of psychoanalysis Z.Freud and his successor K.G.Jung developed some other, psychological approaches in understanding the symbol and symbolism. In Z.Freud's opinion there are two versions of symbols: universally spread symbols (they can be met in all dreams), e.g. water as a symbol of birth, and extremely limited symbols of individual origin [17]. K.G.Jung largely specifies understanding the symbol proceeding from his doctrine about archetypes. He distinguishes comprehending the symbol from understanding a simple sign: the former has a symbolic meaning, the latter has a semiotic one. As he put it, «the sign is always less than its meaning which it represents while

the symbol is always more than its direct obvious sense» (Jung, 1996, 57).

### 3.6. Symbolism in the Russian philosophy

A.F.Losev also considered the symbol to be much greater than a simple sign or an artistic image. The gnoseological potential of symbolism is best entirely reflected by A.F.Losev in his treating the symbol as generalizations which create «an infinite semantic vista» (Losev, 1991, 258). Symbolism channels our knowledge from the singular to the general and to the universal, from phenomena to essences of different order. Thus, symbols themselves have a hierarchical and multistrata structure. In his work «The Dialectics of Myth» A.F.Losev wrote that the myth «can turn out as a *double symbol*». The myth as «a *symbol of the first degree*» for the author of the myth, is vivid and immediate reality, and one should understand it quite literally. The myth as «a *symbol of the second degree*» besides its direct figurative meaning, specifies another meaning which is a symbol, too (Ibidem, 52). A.F.Losev's structural theory of the symbol became another important stage in the development of symbolism and emphasized a particular role of the symbol in studying spiritual processes in culture.

M.K.Mamardashvili and A.M.Pyatigorskiy maintained symbolism as a means of studying cultures and the symbol as a key to their cognition. At the same time they noted that «there is an extremely interesting phenomenon observable everywhere in the contemporary civilization: «lack of symbolism»» (Mamardashvili and Pyatigorskiy, 1997, 102). This expression of theirs reflects the phenomenon of a symbolical decadence which originates with the advent of various ideologies of the XX<sup>th</sup> century. The scientists exemplified their statement with Z.Freud's sexual symbolics and Marxist social symbolics which had replaced not only the sphere of religion but had also changed symbolical sphere

in the milieu of human knowledge, culture and morality because «symbols are the «signified», they are included in a mode of automatic sign operating to which they do not belong by nature; that is they are desymbolized inside our sign systems» (Ibid., 102-103).

### **Resume: contemporary symbolism**

Contemporary symbolism is being developed in the context of civilizational approach. The well-known American sociologist and futurologist A. Toffler has thoroughly grounded his theory of three waves of global changes in human life and society: the first wave was transition to agricultural production and creation of the agrarian civilization, the second wave was transition to industrial production and creation of the industrial civilization, the third wave is a developing transitional trend to up-to-date production and creating a postindustrial, information, supersymbolic civilization (Toffler, 1999). The wave theory of society development by changes in the technological systems correlates with the theory of cultural transitions by changes in the symbolic systems. We do not at all perceive a ready-made mental model of reality. On the contrary, we are compelled to constantly form and reform it resorting to a symbolic sphere. The industrial civilization took out the most part of social memory beyond the limits of «cranium» where it had been stored earlier. Objectifying and expanding the social memory at the same time meant its freezing as artefacts, books, symbolic systems and other inhabitants of K.R. Popper's «World-3.» And only when these symbols are made to enter a human brain again, they do come to life, they are reprocessed and reconstructed in a new fashion (e.g. by computers and virtual reality). Thus there is realized a transition to another civilization and culture with a different system of symbols. We are at the gate of a

global 'conflict' as a symbolic reflection of M.V. Kozlova's statement «global merging of the inner and the outer..., the merging being fraught with the total failure of human identity mechanisms» (Kozlova, 2009, 316).

Meanwhile at present one can see a symbolical jumble in the intellectual sphere where everything is jumbled up, and philosophy having been split asunder into plurality of directions, is still weaving a web of myriads of its own symbolic constructions. Heterogeneous contemporary symbolism permeates all the aspects of the relation «Man–World». It is in globalization and in the European integration, and in «the World as a Supermarket» by Michel Welbek, and in Vladimir Sorokin's scandalous novels, and in Victor Pelevin's literary philosophy. Art symbolism is being displayed in blending different kinds of art, developing performances, installations, and other innovations, e.g. in expanding the role and place of the museum in the modern world, where the museum is not only a keeper of values, but also their manufacturer, curator and «fashion-maker». The postmodern word as a symbol can be also an exhibit, an element of dancing performance or transferring language structures on interpretation model of a society. Simple things, movements, materials are becoming points of diving in the world of symbols where it is already urgent to practice not only contemplation and interpretation, but interpretation of interpretation, a peculiar walk in a wood of symbols with a small flashlight (proto-sense). Postmodernism is a specific reflection of postmodern in culture, and symbolism plays a crucial part in this neo-transition of senses. As S.B. Sinetskiy underlines, the science under the limited capabilities of a human being to adequately reflect and apprehend the outer world cannot claim to have exhaustive and verified results (Sinetskiy, 2008), we therefore

try and depict a METAPHORICAL picture of contemporary symbolism.

It is like the stone that is rolling down from Sisyphus' hands, it is looking with his eyes gazing on emptiness; it reminds Orpheus' last glance sending Euredica back to Hadean oblivion. In each of its chaotic phenomena, symbolism pulses as the interweaving of naked sense since only symbolism is capable of dancing on ash. Symbols search and find, they are the very essence and infinite nothing, they are time and timelessness, emptiness. All hatred of a rebel and absurdity, and intolerable ease of dancing have challenged the world order. This is a constant penetration of alive into dead, the subtle East into the pragmatic West, the utilitarian West into the refined East, aesthetic Apollonian into passionate Dionysian, drunk Dionysian into esoteric Apollonian for this is artistic and narcotic drunkenness, a gap and a

stop which is similar to existential death, this is a word of farewell and the beginning of nihilism. The sense breaks up asunder when he who is standing on a verge, loses his gift of speech and the expression of his existence together with it. Here he loses both the verge and desire for unity. Here the reality comes to an end and mankind enters a new transition stage – transition into the illusory, into a sphere of the novel, the unknown. Anyway, man becomes an apostate, blind who abandons Plato's symbolic «cave» and strives towards reaching the sun but it blinds his eyes, and being blind man climbs a mountain to get higher but even the lowest mountain is no more attainable to him. This is a picture of postmodern symbolism as we can see it, and the way by which it leads to existential loneliness, to despair, and then to descent again, and so it is eternal until Sisyphus has rolled his stone up the mountain.

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## Генезис символизма

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*Десятки тысяч лет тому назад выделяющемуся трудом из мира животных предку современного человека создание и использование символики дало возможность стать человеком разумным – homo sapiens. В статье исследован генезис символизма в истории культуры, а переходные состояния культуры рассмотрены в свете смены мировоззренческих символических систем. Результаты символизации в развитой форме уже в мифологии и религии способствовали обобщению практики символизирования, что привело к постановке проблемы символического в зарождавшейся философии. Упоминания символа, а также представления о мире как символическом универсуме появились у греческих философов-досократиков, однако первая категоризация символа произошла в религиозно-философских учениях в эпоху Средневековья, и в дальнейшем философская рефлексия символа как самостоятельной категории была осуществлена И.Кантом и И.В.Гёте, которые в качестве метода исследования в науках о культуре предложили символизм.*

*Ключевые слова: человек, символ, культура, миф, религия, философия.*

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